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EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

Executive summary of the 1992 Annual Report of the Executive Director**

1. As requested by the Governing Council in its decision 17/37, paragraph 4, the Executive Director has the honour to present the following executive summary of the 1992 Annual Report as an information document to the Council.

2. The 1992 Annual Report marked the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme and also the last year of office of the second Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Mostafa Tolba, who had been Executive Director of the organization for more than 17 years. In view of these milestones, it was decided that the 1992 Annual Report would be an account of the first 20 years of UNEP's history rather than an account of what had taken place specifically during the year 1992.

3. Chapter one of the report gives an overview of the first 20 years of UNEP's life, since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, which led to the creation of UNEP. It briefly describes the original basic elements of the environment programme: the Governing Council of UNEP, the Environment Coordination Board, the environment secretariat, and, finally, the Environment Fund. It then goes on to briefly outline UNEP's history from its inception to its location in Nairobi from August 1973 through to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held, in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, which had a profound influence on UNEP's work and future.

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* UNEP/GC.18/1.

** The present text supersedes the executive summary presented to the Council at its seventeenth session (UNEP/GC.17/22), which was prepared prior to the finalization of the 1992 Annual Report.

4. In chapter two, the report concentrates on UNEP's catalytic role as expressed through inter-agency cooperation in the field of the environment. It highlights the role of the Environmental Coordination Board, subsequently assumed by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, as well as the extensive efforts at joint programming between UNEP and the United Nations regional commissions and UNDP and the specialized agencies. The chapter highlights a shining example of UNEP coordination and cooperation with United Nations agencies and Governments, namely, cooperation on improving and protecting the environmental situation of the Mediterranean Sea through Mediterranean Action Plan. Finally, this chapter outlines UNEP's cooperation with the secretariats of various environmental conventions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), as well as with the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment (CIDIE) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

5. Chapter three, on the environment programme, sets out, both thematically and historically, the development of the programme in response to various requests from Governments. It gives an overview of the original form of the programme, which concentrated on three areas of the Stockholm Action Plan, namely, environmental assessment, environmental management and support measures. It then provides a history of the various components of UNEP's programme concentrating in particular on the programme activity centres. Particular emphasis has been put on the achievements of each programme component.

6. Chapter four, entitled "Law and the organization - United Nations decisions affecting UNEP", explains the important work of the Governing Council and highlights the decisions that have had a profound influence on the shape and delivery of the organization. In addition, the chapter contains an extensive overview of General Assembly resolutions that have had a direct impact on the work of UNEP and on the work of its Governing Council. A separate section also relates to the work of UNEP decisions of international conferences such as the United Nations Conference - Exposition on Human Settlements in 1976, the United Nations Water Conference in 1977, the United Nations Conference on Desertification in 1977, and so forth, up to the most recent and most important, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

7. In chapter five, developments with regard to administration and finance are explained starting with the establishment of the interim and then the permanent headquarters of UNEP in Gigiri. A history of the staffing of UNEP is given, together with an overview of the contributions and expenditures under the Environment Fund and finance from other sources such as the United Nations regular budget, trust funds and counterpart contributions.

8. Chapter six looks briefly into the future and, in particular, emphasizes the changes that would come about by the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the advent of a new Executive Director in UNEP with a new and up-to-date management style and a vision of what UNEP should be in the future.